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(54) **OPEN VESSEL SEALING INSTRUMENT AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME**

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See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

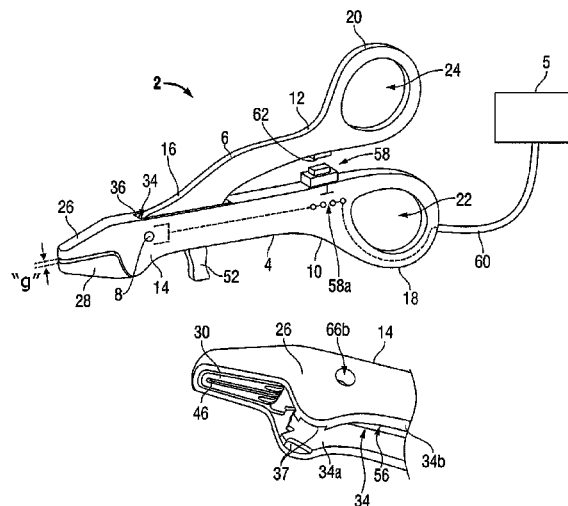
An open electrosurgical forceps is provided and includes a pair of first and second shaft members each having a jaw member at a distal end thereof. The jaw members are movable from a first position in spaced relation relative to one another to a subsequent position wherein the jaw members cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween. A cutting mechanism is adapted to selectively and removably couple to one of the first and second shaft members. The cutting mechanism includes a cutting trigger for selectively advancing a knife blade extending therefrom through a knife channel defined along one or both of the jaw members. The first shaft member includes a stop feature formed thereon and the second shaft member includes a stop member formed thereon. The stop feature and stop member configured to selectively engage one another to limit rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another.

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20 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



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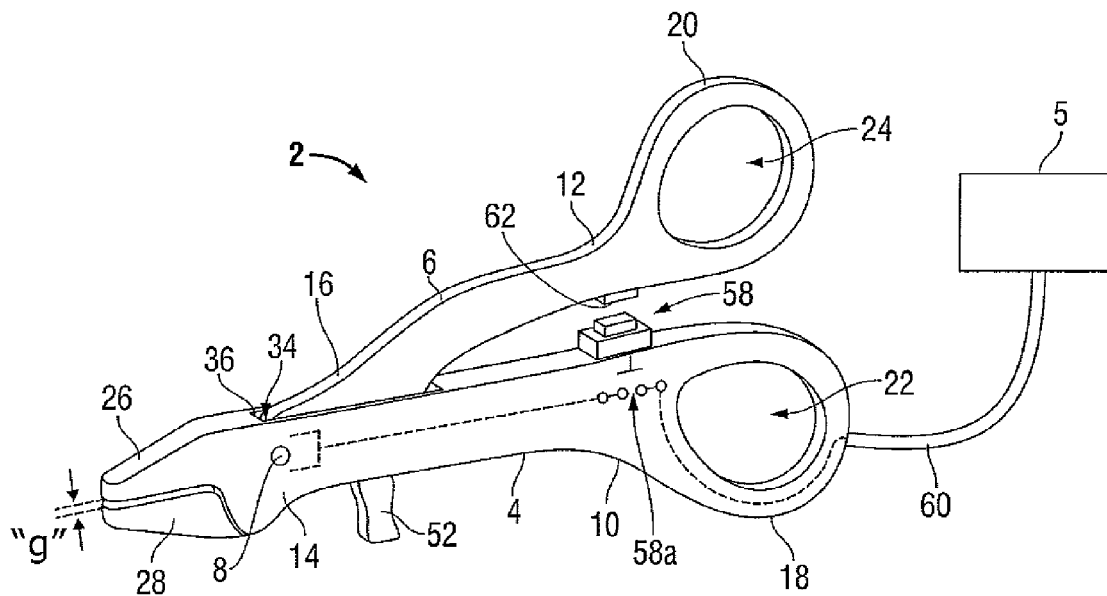


FIG. 1

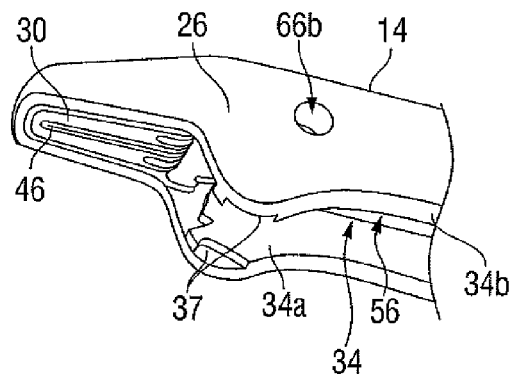


FIG. 2

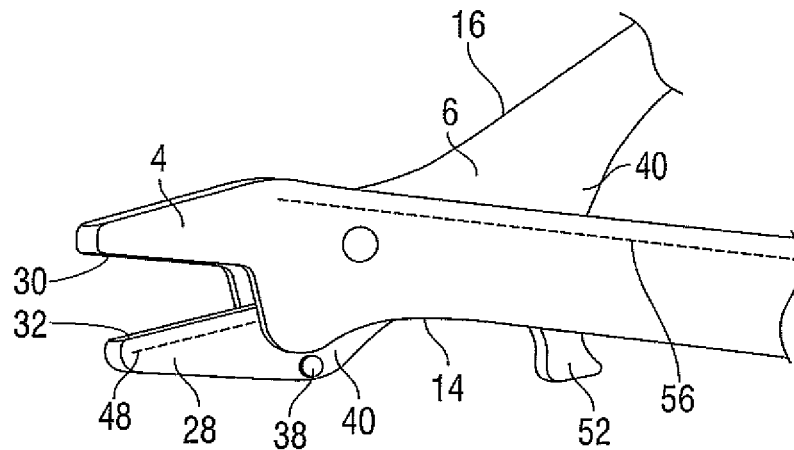


FIG. 3

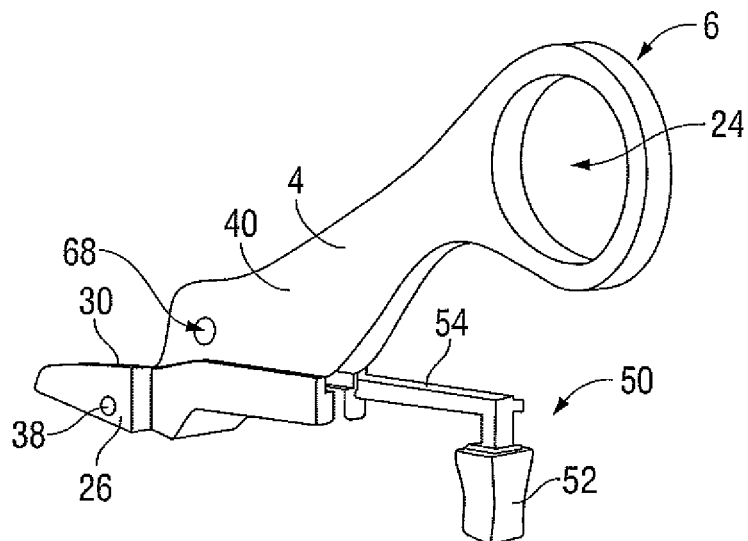


FIG. 4

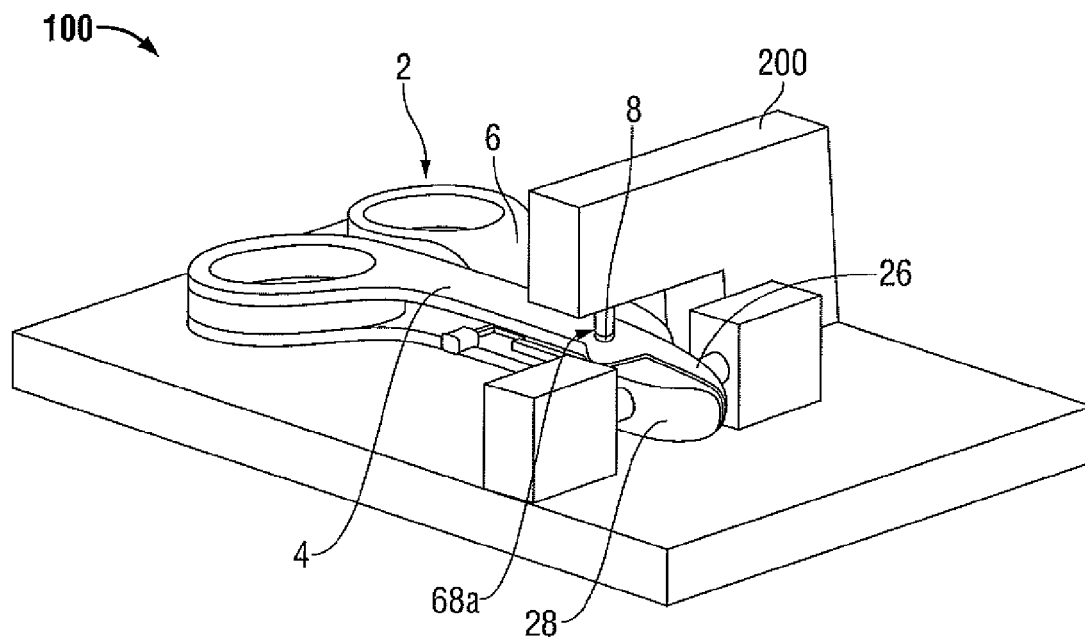


FIG. 5

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OPEN VESSEL SEALING INSTRUMENT AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

The present disclosure relates to an open vessel sealing instrument and method of manufacturing the same. More particularly, the present disclosure relates to plastic open vessel sealing instruments manufactured via a molding process to provide a simple, easy to use and low cost open vessel sealing instrument.

2. Background of Related Art

An electrosurgical forceps is a plier-like instrument which relies on mechanical action between its jaws to grasp, clamp and constrict vessels or tissue; so-called "open forceps" are commonly used in open surgical procedures. Open forceps utilize both mechanical clamping action and electrical energy to effect hemostasis by heating tissue and blood vessels to coagulate and/or cauterize tissue. Forceps of this type, e.g., open forceps, typically, include a pair of shafts that are pivotally coupled to one another. In a bipolar configuration, each shaft includes a respective jaw member at a distal end thereof having a respective seal plate of opposing electrical potential and configured to electrosurgically treat tissue. In a monopolar configuration, the seal plates (or one seal plate) are energized to a first potential and a return pad is energized to a different potential to complete the circuit allowing the forceps to operate in a monopolar fashion.

As is common with conventional forceps of this type, one or more non-conductive stop members are typically disposed on seal surfaces of the respective seal plates of the jaw members. In addition, a cutter or knife blade assembly is typically operably coupled to the forceps and utilized to sever or cut tissue subsequent to tissue being electrosurgically treated.

Manufacture of the above type of forceps is, typically, expensive. That is, stamping the material, e.g., surgical steel, that makes up the shaft is a relatively expensive process. Moreover, positioning the non-conductive stop member(s) on the seal surfaces of the respective seal plates is a complex process that usually requires, first, manufacturing the non-conductive stop members and, subsequently, gluing the non-conductive stop members into an aperture that was previously formed on the seal plates; other techniques include plasma vapor deposition. Further, operably coupling the cutter or knife blade assembly to one or both of the shafts of the forceps, typically, is a lengthy process that increases manufacturing costs.

In addition to the foregoing, because the electrosurgical forceps utilize electrical components, the forceps are not configured for multiple uses. That is, use and subsequent sterilization of the forceps is not part of the operative life cycle of the forceps. In other words, the forceps is, typically, disposed after a single use.

SUMMARY

An aspect of the present disclosure provides an open electrosurgical forceps for treating tissue. The forceps includes a pair of first and second shaft members each having a jaw member at a distal end thereof. The jaw members are movable from a first position in spaced relation relative to one another to at least one subsequent position wherein the jaw members cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween. Each of the jaw members includes an electrically conductive sealing plate for communicating electrosurgical energy through tissue held therebetween. One or both of the jaw members include(s) a

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respective knife channel defined along a length thereof. A cutting mechanism is adapted to selectively and removably couple to one of the first and second shaft members. The cutting mechanism includes a cutting trigger that is configured for selectively advancing a knife blade extending therefrom through the knife channels defined along the at least one jaw member. The knife blade is advanceable from a first position wherein the knife blade is disposed proximal to tissue held between the jaw members to at least one subsequent position wherein the knife blade is disposed distal to tissue held between the jaw members.

According to an aspect of the present disclosure, one of the first and second shaft members includes an elongated slot defined therein and aligned with the knife channel defined along the at least one jaw member. In this instance, the elongated slot is configured to facilitate coupling the cutting mechanism to the respective shaft member. The cutting trigger may extend perpendicular to the knife blade.

In certain instances, the open electrosurgical forceps may include an activation mechanism that is configured to selectively and removably couple to one of the first and second shaft members and is adapted to selectively couple to a source of electrosurgical energy via a cable.

The seal plates may be secured to the jaw members via one of a press-fit and friction-fit such that the seal plates are selectively and releasably coupleable to the respective jaw members.

An opening is disposed adjacent a proximal end of the respective jaw member of the selectively and removably shaft member that couples to the cutting mechanism. The opening is configured to receive the other jaw member.

The shaft member coupled to the cutting mechanism may include one or more stop features defined thereon and adjacent the respective jaw member to control the gap distance between the jaw members. Moreover, the other shaft member may include one or more corresponding stop members defined thereon and adjacent the respective jaw member. The corresponding stop member is configured to selectively engage the stop feature to limit rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another. In certain instances, the stop feature may be a generally arcuate indent and the stop member is a generally cylindrical detent.

Each of the first and second shaft members may be made from plastic and formed via an injection molding process.

An aspect of the present disclosure provides an open electrosurgical forceps for treating tissue. The forceps includes a pair of first and second shaft members each having a jaw member at a distal end thereof. The jaw members are movable from a first position in spaced relation relative to one another to at least one subsequent position wherein the jaw members cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween. Each of the jaw members includes an electrically conductive sealing plate for communicating electrosurgical energy through tissue held therebetween. One of the jaw members includes a stop feature formed thereon and the other one of the jaw members includes a corresponding stop member formed thereon. The stop feature and stop member are configured to selectively engage one another to limit the amount of rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another and defines a gap distance between the jaw members when moved to the subsequent position to grasp tissue.

According to another aspect of the present disclosure, the stop feature is a generally arcuate indent extending radially inward into a sidewall of the first shaft member adjacent the respective jaw member. The stop member may be a generally cylindrical detent extending radially outward from a sidewall of the opposite jaw member.

The open electrosurgical forceps may include a cutting mechanism that is adapted to selectively and removably couple to one of the first and second shaft members. The cutting mechanism includes a cutting trigger. The cutting trigger is configured to selectively advance a knife blade extending therefrom through respective knife channels defined along the jaw members from a first position wherein the knife blade is disposed proximal to tissue held between the jaw members to at least one subsequent position wherein the knife blade is disposed distal to tissue held between the jaw members. In certain instances, the cutting trigger may extend perpendicular to the knife blade.

An activation mechanism may be configured to selectively and removably couple to at least one of the first and second shaft members and adapted to selectively couple to a source of electrosurgical energy via a cable.

The seal plates may be secured to the jaw members via one of a press-fit and friction-fit such that the seal plates are selectively and releasably coupleable to the respective jaw members.

An opening is disposed adjacent a proximal end of the respective jaw member of the shaft member coupled to the cutting mechanism. The opening configured to receive the other jaw member.

Each of the first and second shaft members may be made from plastic and formed via an injection molding process.

Another aspect of the present disclosure provides a method of manufacturing an open electrosurgical forceps. The method includes forming a pair of first and second shaft members each having a jaw member at a distal end thereof. Each jaw member is formed with a transverse aperture extending therethrough. The first shaft member includes a stop feature formed thereon and the second shaft includes a corresponding stop member formed thereon. The stop feature and stop member are configured to selectively engage one another to limit rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another and define a gap distance between the jaw members when moved to the subsequent position to grasp tissue. Subsequently, the first and second shaft members are positioned in juxtaposed relation to each other. Thereafter, a pivot pin is pressed through each of the first and second shaft members to pivotably couple the first and second shafts to one another. Then, a cutting mechanism is coupled to at least one of the first and second shaft members. And, an activation mechanism is coupled to at least one the first and second shaft members.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Various embodiments of the present disclosure are described hereinbelow with reference to the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side, perspective view of an open electrosurgical forceps according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a partial, perspective view of a distal end of a first shaft member of the forceps depicted in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a partial, perspective view illustrating jaw members of the forceps depicted in FIG. 1 in an open configuration;

FIG. 4 is a rear, perspective view illustrating a back end of the first shaft member; and

FIG. 5 is perspective view illustrating a step of a manufacturing process of the forceps depicted FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

Detailed embodiments of the present disclosure are disclosed herein; however, the disclosed embodiments are

merely examples of the disclosure, which may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present disclosure in virtually any appropriately detailed structure.

Referring now to FIGS. 1-5, a forceps 2 for use with open surgical procedures is illustrated. Forceps 2 includes elongated shaft members 4 and 6 that are individually formed via an injection molding process and, subsequently, coupled to one another via a pivot pin 8; a manufacturing method of the forceps 2 is described in greater detail below.

Continuing with reference to FIGS. 1-4, shaft members 4 and 6 include respective proximal ends 10 and 12 and distal ends 14 and 16. In the drawings and in the descriptions which follow, the term "proximal", as is traditional, will refer to the end of the forceps 2 which is closer to the user, while the term "distal" will refer to the end which is further from the user.

Respective handles 18 and 20 are disposed at the proximal ends 10 and 12 and define finger holes 22 and 24 therethrough for receiving a finger of the user. As can be appreciated, finger holes 22 and 24 facilitate movement of the shafts 4 and 6 relative to one another, which, in turn, pivots a pair of opposing jaw members 26 and 28 from an open position wherein the jaw members 26 and 28 are disposed in spaced relation relative to one another (as best seen in FIG. 3) to a clamping or closed position wherein the jaw members 26 and 28 cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween (as best seen in FIG. 1).

Jaw members 26 and 28 are disposed at respective distal ends 14 and 16 (FIGS. 1 and 3). Jaw members 26 and 28 are configured to grasp and, subsequently, electrosurgically treat tissue grasped therebetween. In the illustrated embodiment, forceps 2 includes a bipolar jaw configuration (e.g., the jaw members 26 and 28 are energized to opposite electrical potentials and operable to conduct electrosurgical energy through tissue held between the jaw members 26 and 28). A monopolar jaw configuration may also be utilized, e.g., one of the jaw members is energized to a first electrical potential and a remote return pad is energized to a different potential and positioned on a patient's skin.

Jaw members 26 and 28 include respective electrically conductive sealing plates 30 and 32 (FIGS. 2-4) for communicating electrosurgical energy through tissue held therebetween. Seal plates 30 and 32 are secured to the respective jaw members 26 and 28 via one or more suitable securement methods. In the illustrated embodiment, seal plates 30 and 32 are secured to respective jaw members 26 and 28 in either a press or friction fit manner. Having seal plates 30 and 32 that are selectively and releasably coupleable to the respective jaw members 26 and 28 may facilitate sterilization of a reusable forceps 2. For example, and in accordance with the instant disclosure, the seal plates 30 and 32 may be utilized with the forceps 2 and, subsequently, uncoupled therefrom for sterilization and future use with either the forceps 2 or another forceps. Accordingly, the seal plates 30 and 32 may be disposable, re-usable, and/or reposable.

A slot or opening 34 (FIGS. 1-2) of suitable configuration is defined adjacent a proximal end 36 of the jaw member 26. In one embodiment, opening 34 includes a generally elongated configuration and is defined by a pair of sidewalls 34a and 34b positioned at the proximal end 36 of the jaw member 26, as best seen in FIG. 2. The opening 34 is configured to receive jaw member 28 of the shaft member 6 during the manufacture and assembly of the forceps 2.

One or more stop features (FIG. 2) are defined on an interior of the sidewalls 34a and 34b and are disposed on the

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shaft member 4 adjacent jaw member 26. In one embodiment, the stop feature(s) is/are in the form of a pair of generally arcuate indents 37 that extend radially inward on each of the sidewalls 34a and 34b (see FIG. 2). Indents 37 are formed on the sidewalls 34a and 34b during the molding process of the shaft member 4. Alternatively, the indents 37 may be cut or notched out subsequent to forming the shaft member 4. The indents 37 are configured to selectively engage a pair of corresponding stop members 38 disposed on the shaft member 6 (See FIG. 3).

In one embodiment, stop members 38 are in the form of a pair of detents 38 that extend radially outward from left and right sidewalls 40 (right sidewall not explicitly shown) of the shaft member 6 (see FIG. 1 in combination with FIG. 3). Detents 38 may have any suitable configuration, e.g., square, cylindrical, rectangular, etc. In the illustrated embodiment, detents 38 include a generally cylindrical configuration. Detents 38 are formed on left sidewall and the right sidewalls 40 during the molding process of the shaft member 6. Alternatively, the detents 38 may be secured to left and right sidewalls 40 subsequent the formation of the shaft member 6.

The indents 37 and detents 38 are configured to selectively engage one another to limit the rotation of the shaft members 4 and 6 with respect to one another. Moreover, indents 37 and detents 38 are configured to facilitate gripping and manipulation of tissue and to define a gap distance “g” between opposing jaw members 26 and 28 during sealing of tissue, see FIG. 1 for example. In one embodiment, the separation distance during sealing or the gap distance “g” is within the range of about 0.001 inches to about 0.006 inches.

Each jaw member 26 and 28 includes a respective knife channel 46 (FIG. 2) and 48 (in FIG. 3 knife channel 48 is shown in phantom) defined along a length thereof. In particular, jaw members 26 and 28 include respective knife channels 46 and 48 that are configured to allow reciprocation of a cutting mechanism 50 (or component thereof) therewithin (FIG. 4). In certain embodiments, the knife channels 46 and 48 may be tapered or some other configuration that facilitates or enhances cutting of the tissue during reciprocation of the cutting mechanism 50 in the distal direction. Moreover, the knife channels 46 and 48 may be formed with one or more safety features (not shown) that prevent the cutting mechanism 50 from advancing through the tissue until the jaw members 26 and 28 are closed about the tissue.

Cutting mechanism 50 is adapted to selectively and removably couple to either shaft member 4 or 6. In the illustrated embodiment, the cutting mechanism 50 is shown coupled to the shaft 4. Cutting mechanism 50 includes a cutting trigger 52 that is configured to selectively advance a knife blade 54 extending therefrom through the knife channels 46 and 48. In particular, knife blade 54 is advanceable from a first position, wherein the knife blade 54 is disposed proximal to tissue held between the jaw members 26 and 28, to one or more subsequent positions, wherein the knife blade 54 is disposed distal to tissue held between the jaw members 26 and 28. For ease of operation, the cutting trigger 52 is shown oriented perpendicular with respect to the knife blade 54.

In some embodiments, an elongated slot 56 (FIGS. 2-3) is defined along one or both shaft members 4 and 6. For illustrative purposes, the elongated slot 56 is shown on shaft 4. Elongated slot 56 is aligned with the knife channels 46 and 48 defined within jaw members 26 and 28. The elongated slot 56 is configured to facilitate coupling the cutting mechanism 50 to the shaft member 4 and reciprocating the knife blade 54 through the knife channels 46 and 48 defined along the jaw

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members 26 and 28. That is, the elongated slot 56 helps maintain the knife blade 54 in substantial alignment with the knife channels 46 and 48.

In accordance with the instant disclosure, the cutting mechanism 50 may be utilized with the forceps 2 and, subsequently, uncoupled therefrom for sterilization and future use with either the forceps 2 or another forceps. Accordingly, the cutting mechanism 50 may be disposable, re-usable, and/or reusable.

With reference again to FIG. 1, an activation mechanism 58 is configured to selectively and removably couple to either shaft members 4 or 6. For illustrative purposes, the activation mechanism 58 is shown selectively and removably coupled to shaft 4 via a snap, press or friction fit manner. Activation mechanism 58, e.g., a push-button switch, relay or the like, is configured to provide electrosurgical energy to the seal plates 30 and 32. In particular, the activation mechanism 58 is configured such that when the jaw members 26 and 28 are moved to the clamping position, the shaft member 6 contacts or “presses” the activation mechanism 58, which, in turn, closes a circuit 58a of the forceps 2 (FIG. 1). In one particular embodiment, an optional extension pin 62 is operably disposed on shaft 6 and is configured to contact the activation mechanism 58. The extension pin 62 may be configured such that the activation mechanism 58 does not close the circuit 58a until a predetermined gap distance “g” has been achieved between the jaw members 26 and 28.

Activation mechanism 58 is configured to electrically communicate with a cable assembly 60 that couples the circuit 58a to an electrosurgical energy source, e.g., a generator 5. The activation mechanism 58 may be coupled to shaft 4. The cable assembly 60 is configured to provide electrosurgical energy to each of the seal plates 30 and 32 when the activation mechanism 58 is pressed and the forceps 2 is coupled to generator 5. The cable assembly 60 is adapted to selectively couple to the generator 5 via a cable 64 (FIG. 1). Cable 64 may be configured to releasably couple to the forceps 2.

Alternately, the forceps 2 may be battery-powered. In this instance, activation mechanism 58 may be configured to electrically communicate with a battery (not explicitly shown) that is configured to provide electrosurgical energy to the seal plates 32, 34.

In accordance with the instant disclosure, the activation mechanism 58 and/or cable assembly 60 may be utilized with the forceps 2 and, subsequently, uncoupled therefrom for sterilization and future use with either the forceps 2 or another forceps. Accordingly, the activation mechanism 58 and/or cable assembly 60 may be disposable, re-usable, and/or reusable.

In one particular embodiment, to facilitate coupling and uncoupling the activation mechanism 58 and the cable assembly 60 to and from the forceps 2, the activation mechanism 58 and cable assembly 60 may be configured as a unitary component.

Operation of the forceps 2 is similar to conventional open forceps. In particular, tissue is positioned between the jaw members 26 and 28. Thereafter, shaft members 4 and 6 are moved toward one another until detent 38 contacts indent 36, which corresponds to jaw members 26 and 28 being in a clamped configuration separated by a gap distance “g”. When tissue is quite thick, however, the detent 38 and indent 36 may not contact one another. In this instance, for example, the detent 38 and indent 36 may contact one another only after tissue has been “cooked.” In one embodiment, this gap distance “g” allows the extension 62 to contact the activation mechanism 58, which, in turn, allows electrosurgical energy to flow to the seal plates 30 and 32. Unlike conventional

forceps, however, that utilize stop members on the seal plates of the jaw members, the unique configuration of the indents 37 and corresponding detents 38 provide a simple and cost effective method of maintaining a specific gap distance “g” between the jaw members 26 and 28. And, the likelihood of the stop members, e.g., detents 38, becoming dislodged is diminished, if not eliminated.

With reference now to FIG. 5, a method 100 of manufacturing the forceps 2 is illustrated. Forceps 2 is formed by an injection molding process that produces a forceps 2 that is disposable, re-usable or reposible. Briefly, an injection molding process, typically, includes one or more suitable materials, e.g., thermoplastic, thermosetting plastic material, etc., that is fed into one or more suitable holding vessels, e.g., a heated barrel, and, subsequently, mixed, and, thereafter, forced into a pair of mold cavities where the plastic is allowed to cool and harden to the configuration of the mold cavities. The mold cavities are configured to provide a pair of shaft members 4 and 6. As noted above, shaft member 4 may be formed with indents 37 formed thereon and the shaft member 6 is formed with detents 38 formed thereon such that the indents 37 and detents 38 may function in a manner as described above.

Shaft member 4 is formed with opening 34 therethrough to receive jaw member 28 of the shaft member 6 therethrough during the manufacture and assembly of forceps 2. In the illustrated embodiment, the opening 36 extends perpendicularly to apertures 66a (in FIG. 5 aperture 66a is shown engaged with pivot pin 8 and, as such, is not visible), 66b (FIG. 2) and 68 formed on respective shaft members 4 and 6 (FIG. 4).

In one embodiment, shaft 4 is formed with respective apertures 66a and 66b of suitable configuration through sidewalls 34a and 34b (FIG. 2). Likewise, shaft 6 is formed with an aperture 68 of suitable configuration through left and right sidewalls 40. Unlike shaft 6 that includes aperture 68 being formed through left and right sidewalls 40 during the aforementioned molding process, aperture 66b is formed through the sidewall 34b during the aforementioned molding process, as best seen in FIG. 2, and aperture 66a is formed through the sidewall 34a subsequent to the molding process; this facilitates coupling the shafts 4 and 6 to one another during the manufacturing process of the forceps 2.

In one embodiment, to assemble the forceps 2, shafts 4 and 6 are positioned in juxtaposed relation to each other, see FIG. 5. Thereafter, pivot pin 8 is pressed through each of the apertures 66b and 68, via one or more suitable pressing device(s) 200, to pivotably couple the shafts members 4 and 6 to one another. In accordance with the present disclosure, this pressing sequence provides the final aperture 66a through the sidewall 34a. This allows for subsequent removal of the pivot pin 8. Thus, the forceps 2 may be utilized as described above, thereafter the pivot pin 8 may be removed and the forceps 2 may be sterilized for future use.

From the foregoing and with reference to the various figure drawings, those skilled in the art will appreciate that certain modifications can also be made to the present disclosure without departing from the scope of the same. For example, it may prove advantageous to manufacture and, subsequently, ship the forceps 2 in a “ready-to-use” configuration, e.g., the forceps 2 is shipped pre-assembled. Alternatively, the forceps 2 may be manufactured and shipped in an “un-assembled” configuration. In this instance, one or more of the operative components of the forceps 2 may be shipped uncoupled thereto. For example, the cutting mechanism 50 may be shipped as a separate component and coupled to the forceps 2 in the surgical environment. Or, each component of the for-

ceps 2 may be shipped together and, subsequently, coupled to one another in the surgical environment, e.g., the forceps 2 may be manufactured and sold as a kit.

While several embodiments of the disclosure have been shown in the drawings, it is not intended that the disclosure be limited thereto, as it is intended that the disclosure be as broad in scope as the art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. Therefore, the above description should not be construed as limiting, but merely as exemplifications of particular embodiments. Those skilled in the art will envision other modifications within the scope and spirit of the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. An open electrosurgical forceps for treating tissue, comprising:

a pair of first and second shaft members, each of the first and second shaft members having a handle at a proximal end thereof and a jaw member at a distal end thereof, the handles of the first and second shaft members movable relative to one another to pivot the first and second shaft members in relation to one another, the jaw members movable from a first position in spaced relation relative to one another to at least one subsequent position wherein the jaw members cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween, each of the jaw members including an electrically conductive sealing plate for communicating electrosurgical energy through tissue held therebetween; and

a cutting mechanism selectively and removably coupled to at least one of the first and second shaft members, the cutting mechanism including a cutting trigger configured for selectively advancing a knife blade extending therefrom through a knife channel defined in at least one of the jaw members from a first position wherein the knife blade is disposed proximal to tissue held between the jaw members to at least one subsequent position wherein the knife blade is disposed distal to tissue held between the jaw members.

2. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 1, wherein an elongated slot is defined in the at least one first and second shaft member, the elongated slot aligned with the knife channel defined along the at least one jaw member and configured to facilitate coupling the cutting mechanism to the at least one first and second shaft member.

3. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 1, wherein the cutting trigger extends perpendicular to the knife blade.

4. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 1, further comprising an activation mechanism configured to selectively and removably couple to at least one of the first and second shaft members and adapted to selectively couple to a source of electrosurgical energy via a cable.

5. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 1, wherein seal plates are secured to the jaw members in one of a press-fit and friction-fit manner such that the seal plates are selectively and releasably coupleable to the respective jaw members.

6. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 2, wherein an opening is disposed adjacent a proximal end of the respective jaw member of the at least one first and second shaft member, the opening configured to receive the other jaw member.

7. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 2, wherein the at least one first and second shaft member includes at least one stop feature defined thereon and adjacent the respective jaw member to control the gap distance between the jaw members.

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8. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 7, wherein the other shaft member includes at least one corresponding stop member defined thereon and adjacent the respective jaw member, wherein the corresponding stop member is configured to selectively engage the stop feature to limit rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another.

9. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 8, wherein stop feature is a generally arcuate indent and the stop member is a generally cylindrical detent.

10. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 1, wherein each of the first and second shaft members is made from plastic and formed via an injection molding process.

11. An open electrosurgical forceps for treating tissue, comprising:

a pair of first and second shaft members, each of the first and second shaft members having a handle at a proximal end thereof and a jaw member extending distally from a distal end thereof, the handles of the first and second shaft members movable relative to one another to pivot the first and second shaft members in relation to one another, the jaw members movable from a first position in spaced relation relative to one another to at least one subsequent position wherein the jaw members cooperate to grasp tissue therebetween, each of the jaw members including an electrically conductive sealing plate for communicating electrosurgical energy through tissue held therebetween,

wherein the first shaft member includes a stop feature formed thereon and the second shaft member includes a corresponding stop member formed thereon, the stop feature extending radially inward into a sidewall of the first shaft member adjacent the respective jaw member and the stop member extending radially outward from a sidewall of the second shaft member, the stop feature and stop member configured to selectively engage one another to limit rotation of the first and second shaft members with respect to one another and define a gap distance between the jaw members when moved to the subsequent position to grasp tissue.

12. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, wherein the stop feature is a generally arcuate indent.

13. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, wherein the stop member is a generally cylindrical detent.

14. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, further comprising a cutting mechanism adapted to selectively and removably couple to at least one of the first and second shaft members, the cutting mechanism including a cutting trigger configured to selectively advance a knife blade extending therefrom through respective knife channels defined along the jaw members from a first position wherein

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the knife blade is disposed proximal to tissue held between the jaw members to at least one subsequent position wherein the knife blade is disposed distal to tissue held between the jaw members.

15. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 14, wherein the cutting trigger extends perpendicular to the knife blade.

16. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, further comprising an activation mechanism configured to selectively and removably couple to at least one of the first and second shaft members and adapted to selectively couple to a source of electrosurgical energy via a cable.

17. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, wherein seal plates are secured to the jaw members in one of a press-fit and friction-fit manner such that the seal plates are selectively and releasably coupleable to the respective jaw members.

18. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 14, wherein an opening is disposed adjacent a proximal end of the respective jaw member of the at least one first and second shaft member, the opening configured to receive the other jaw member.

19. An open electrosurgical forceps according to claim 11, wherein each of the first and second shaft members are made from plastic and formed via an injection molding process.

20. A method of manufacturing an open electrosurgical forceps, comprising:

forming a pair of first and second shaft members via an injection molding process, each of the first and second shaft members having a handle disposed at a proximal end thereof and a jaw member at a distal end thereof, each of the first and second shaft members formed with a transverse aperture extending therethrough, the first shaft member having an opening extending along the first shaft member relative to the transverse aperture, the opening configured to receive the jaw member of the second shaft member therethrough;

positioning the first and second shaft members in juxtaposed relation to each other;

pressing a pivot pin through each of the first and second shaft members to pivotably couple the first and second shaft members to one another such that the handles of the first and second shaft members are movable relative to one another to pivot the first and second shaft members in relation to one another;

removably coupling a cutting mechanism to at least one of the first and second shaft members; and

coupling an activation mechanism to at least one the first and second shaft members.

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